

Figure 33: Summary of Land Protection Strategic Actions		
Strategy	Lead	Priority
1. To provide a new incentive for landowners to preserve forestland, modify the Agricultural Land Preservation program to provide for forest protection districts and acquisition of easements on private forestland in Delaware using similar methodology as is currently used for farmland preservation.	DDAF	High
<i>Action Steps:</i>		
Draft Legislation, build alliance for sponsoring/supporting, and identify funding for introduction/passage in 2005 Legislative session. Important provisions include the allowance for counties/NGOs to add value for priority properties, protection of sensitive areas from timbering activity (stream, wetland, and coastal plain pond buffers), elimination of transfer tax on transactions, elimination of property tax on protected woodlands, forest management plans, and allowances for forest management for biodiversity conservation where desired by landowners.	DDAF	2005
Provide input on drafting of legislation and support for passage of legislation in House/Senate.	TNC, DNS, Comm-unity	2005
Promote availability of state forest easement program to priority landowners in the Corridor and contribute financially to the protection of priority forest lands where appropriate.	TNC, DNS, DDAF, NCC, KCD, Land-owners	2006 and beyond
Develop a long-term funding source not in conflict with other competing funding needs; Explore creative alternatives such as a forestland conversion tax (tax for converting forest to development, use resulting revenue for acquisition of forest easements.)	DDAF	
2. To maximize protection in the Corridor, coordinate the efforts of all land-protecting organizations who can play a role in permanent protection of priority areas on private lands (forests, riparian buffers to streams, marshes, coastal plain ponds, and contributing scenic roadways and agricultural areas) by using conservation easements, purchases, and bargain sales strategically and in places appropriate to each.	TNC to convene	High
<i>Action Steps:</i>		
Translate Corridor priorities into priority areas for each land-protecting agency/organization in the Corridor and meet to identify those priorities and any crucial gaps in capacity.	various	2005
Conduct landowner outreach to priority properties to provide an alternative to development, before development occurs.	various, land-owners	2005 and beyond
Designate Corridor priority lands as a Delaware State Resource Area.	DNREC, OSPC	2005
Identify lands with priority coastal plain pond complexes that are not participating in USDA programs and provide this information to land-protecting organizations for prioritization.	NRCS	2005
Review Corridor priorities and recommendations in New Castle County Land Use Committee and discuss ways to more clearly identify/coordinate code protections to preserve those priorities, including changing "SR" terminology to more clearly express conservation designation/intention.	NCC	2005
Clearly identify and incorporate Corridor priority lands in next round of county comprehensive planning/plans.	NCC, KCD, KCM	2007?
3. To provide additional incentives for landowners to preserve forestlands, overlay or combine forest protection agreements with agricultural preservation easements (existing and future) to provide greater forest protection and enhanced bids.	TNC, DDAP	Medium
<i>Action Steps:</i>		
Identify priority properties/areas for overlaying forest easements and provide this list to agricultural preservation program outreach/cultivation staff (possibly through first action step in Strategy #2 above.)	TNC	
Explore opportunities for providing greater forest protection within agricultural conservation easements (such as through the requirement of a forest management plan) for Corridor priority areas.	DDAP	
Include information on the possibility of forest easement overlays/combinations in agricultural preservation program literature and outreach efforts and notify NGOs when opportunities with new/existing applicants arise.	DDAP	
Cultivate/negotiate forest overlay/combination easements that arise through agricultural preservation program applications/negotiations on Corridor priority lands.	TNC, land-owners	
4. To enhance incentives to donate conservation easements, amend the Delaware conservation tax credit law to allow for the sale of credits.	TNC	Medium
<i>Action Steps:</i>		
Draft legislation; use Virginia program as a model for allowing sale of credits on open market.	TNC	
5. To improve or create new incentives to landowners to preserve forestland, expand opportunities for property tax relief for forest landowners.	TNC	Medium
<i>Action Steps:</i>		
Determine the potential benefit to Corridor landowners from removal of the sales generation requirement under Delaware's Farmland Assessment Act (via Research strategy) or the acreage minimum under the Commercial Forest Plantation Ac; if benefits warrant, take advantage of any future property tax re-assessment as opportunity to amend the Act (which provides property tax reduction to farm/forestland) to remove the income generation requirement for lands in priority forest areas with a forest management plan for conservation/biodiversity, and to include penalty fees for forestry land withdrawal; extend benefits to lifelong farmers for their retirement years.	TNC	Upon reassessment
Provide information to landowners of priority forested parcels regarding property tax relief, and their ability to meet the revenue requirement of the Farmland Assessment Act by demonstrating "potential value" in the form of a letter from the state forester.	TNC, DDAF, land owners	
Explore opportunities for expanding use of tax credits for MALF districts as part of next comprehensive planning process.	KCM	
Seek county property tax exemption/reduction for lands with conservation easements on forestland; work with assessors to recognize the reduction of value resulting from easements. (Amendment to state law needed?)	TNC	
6. To increase the pool of federal funds available for land protection in the Corridor, support the Forest Legacy program, the Delmarva Conservation Corridor, and other programs.	TNC, DNS, Comm-unity	Medium
<i>Action Steps:</i>		
Cultivate a competitive Forest Legacy project/proposal in the Corridor (look for a project that includes a large area -- one or more parcels-- incorporates endangered species protection, borders state forest land, and illustrates interstate collaboration for optimal ranking; explore matching agricultural land protection PDR funds for bonus points.)	DDAF, land owners	
Explore the possibility of a MD Forest Legacy area that builds on the Blackbird Forest Legacy area in Delaware.	MDDNR	
Support funding for Forest Legacy and Delmarva Conservation Corridor in Congress.	TNC, DNS, Comm-unity	
7. To increase and improve the pool of state funds available for land protection in the Corridor, amend or create state open space funding sources.	Various	High
<i>Action Steps:</i>		
Advocate for increased funding for the State of Delaware Open Space program, Agricultural Land Preservation program, and Department of Transportation funding (for transportation management/enhancement); advocate/educate for the use tools such as conservation easements, conservation buyers, and broker as ways to stretch limited protection funds, and leverage state funds by prioritizing their use for projects that can be matedched with federal, county,and private sources.	TNC, DNS, other NGOs, Comm-unity	2005, ongoing
Focus available public land protection and restoration funding on Corridor priorities to the maximum extent feasible. (also included as Restoration and Management Strategy #9)	Various	2005 ongoing
Engage conservation organizations for support on any Referendum & Initiative efforts in Delaware for legislation allowing referendum to benefit open space funding (on state and county basis.)		
Explore opportunities for increased/restored funding in Maryland for land protection programs with Corridor eligibility.	ESLC, KCD	
Explore possibilities under the Scenic and Historic Highways Program and federal DOT corridor management planning/funding that could bring resources to bear in the Corridor	DDOT	
8. To increase and improve the contribution of county funds to land protection in the Corridor	NCC, KCD, KCM	High
<i>Action Steps:</i>		
Increase county financial contributions to forestland and farmland protection through general realty transfer tax, agland transfer tax, county bonds, conversion taxes, or other mechanisms.		
ABBREVIATIONS:		
DDAF: Delaware Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service		
TNC: The Nature Conservancy		
DNS: Delaware Nature Society		
NCC: New Castle County, Delaware	ESLC: Eastern Shore Land Conservancy	
KCD: Kent County, Delaware	DDOT: Delaware Department of Transportation	
DNREC: Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control	DDAP Delaware Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Preservation Program	
OSPC: Office of State Planning Coordination	MDDNR: Maryland Department of Natural Resources	
NRCS: Natural Resource Conservation Service		
KCM: Kent County, Maryland		
NGOs: Non Governmental Organizations		